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Message Text

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45
ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 SNM-02 DRC-01 /102 W
---------- 010159
P R 031617Z JAN 74
FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9415
INFO GOV PANCANAL
USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 0019

S/NM FOR AMBASSADOR HANDLEY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SNAR PN
SUBJECT: PANAMA: JACK ANDERSON NARCOTICS STORY

REF: A) STATE 251706
B) USINFO P 281825Z DEC 73

1. CAREFUL REVIEW OF PANAMANIAN PRESS SINCE PUBLICA-
TION ON DECEMBER 28 OF JACK ANDERSON STORY IN WASHINGTON
POST ALLEGING INVOLVEMENT OF PANAMANIAN OFFICIALS
(INCLUDING FOREIGN MINISTER) IN NARCOTICS TRAFFIC HAS
YET TO PRODUCE ANY* VIDENCE THAT GOP TOOK NOTICE OF
ARTICLE. SO FAR AS EMBASSY ABLE TO DETERMINE THERE HAS
BEEN NO PUBLIC COMMENT WHATSOEVER AND THE ARTICLE
ITSELF HAS NOT BEEN REPRODUCED.

2. COMMENT: HAVING BEEN ALERTED DURING AMBASSADOR
BUNKER'S VISIT IN DECEMBER TO THE POSSIBILITY THAT
JACK ANDERSON MIGHT BE PLANNING A REPLAY OF AN OLD
STORY CONCERNING ALLEGED INVOLVEMENT OF HIGH PANAMANIAN
OFFICIALS IN THE NARCOTICS TRADE, FOREIGN MINISTER JUAN
ANTONIO TACK WAS ESPECIALLY APPRECIATIVE OF THE DEPART-
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MENT'S ADVANCE NOTICE CONCERNING THE ARTICLE PUBLISHED

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ON DECEMBER 28. WHILE VISIBLY BOTHERED AT AGAIN HAVING ALLEGATIONS LEVIED AGAINST HIM, FONMIN WAS MODEL OF RESTRAINT AND TOLD CHARGE HE COULD CONVEY MINISTER'S APPRECIATION TO DEPARTMENT AND COUNTRY DIRECTORY BELL.

3. MINISTER TOLD CHARGE THAT FACT OF STORY'S PUBLICATION WOULD NOT "INFLUENCE NEGOTIATIONS" IN ANY WAY. AS MINISTER WALKED CHARGE TO CHANCERY DOOR, HE AGAIN EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR ADVANCE WARNING, REPEATED THAT ANDERSON STORY WOULD NOT AFFECT NEGOTIATIONS, AND STATED THAT "IMPORTANT THING WAS THAT TREATY NEGOTIATIONS GO FORWARD." MINISTER ASKED FOR COPIES OF ANDERSON STORY, THE DEPARTMENT'S DENIAL OF SAME EXPECTED AT NOON THAT DAY(DECEMBER 28) AND COPY OF PRESIDENT NIXON'S STATEMENT (TO BE RELEASED LATER THAT DAY AT SAN CLEMENTE). ALL THREE DOCUMENTS WERE HAND CARRIED TO THE MINISTRY WHEN ULTIMATELY RECEIVED FROM WIRE SERVICES FOR WHICH MINISTER WAS GRATEFUL.

4. EMBASSY BELIEVES DEPARTMENT SHOULD NOTE THE CARE AND RESERVE WITH WHICH GOP PLAYING ALL ASPECTS OF RENEWED TREATY TALKS. OPPORTUNITIES OF WHICH ADVANTAGE WOULD HAVE BEEN TAKE TO FLAIL THE USG ON ANOTHER OCCASION, ARE SIMPLY BEING PASSED BY IN WHAT CAN ONLY BE INTERPRETED AS STRONG WILL AND DESIRE TO MAINTAIN AN IMPECCABLE CLIMATE FOR NEGOTIATIONS.
DANIELS

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